

social and political power which his money would give him; when Deryk was less of a precocious schoolboy, he would not want to combine it. . . .

The clock on the mantelpiece began to strike eleven, and Sir Aylmer's shaggy, grey eyebrows met in a straight, frowning bar; it was intolerable that after two years' polishing Deryk should be the same heedless, undisciplined, self-centred, mannerless hobbledehoy.

"Ring that bell, Ted," he ordered peremptorily. "I *will* know where Deryk's got to."

"What are you going to do with him now that you've got him home?" Hatherly asked lazily, as he walked to the fireplace. Sir Aylmer's tone suggested that sharp words were going to be exchanged.

"You asked me that at dinner," was the curt reply. "It depends on what sort of man you've made of him."

"Oh, I've done nothing. There was no need. You see, he doesn't drink, doesn't gamble—he's too fastidious to have any vices——"

"No entanglements?" asked Sir Aylmer. His voice was even, but the watchful, deep-set eyes were curious.

"He's entirely uninterested in women, except to idealise them from a distance."

"That by itself won't save a man," said Sir Aylmer drily.

"Well, he gave me no trouble of any kind."

Sir Aylmer sat in reflective silence for a moment.

"I suppose it wasn't generally known who he was," he suggested at length, as though pursuing his own line of thought.

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When his father's summons at length reached him, Deryk left the library and bounded through the west corridor and hall in shirt sleeves, with his hands and arms overflowing with little boxes and a tangle of lace and silk. He took an active pleasure in slamming a door or two and whistling as he ran; the silence of the house was a thing to be resisted.